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## IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Pertussis (Whooping Cough) Advisory In San Bernardino County

San Bernardino. Adults who have contact with infants from birth to 12 months of age, were advised today by Dr. Maxwell Ohikhuare, San Bernardino County Health Officer, to get vaccinated against pertussis, also known as whooping cough.

"Whooping cough has been declared an epidemic in California, and may be the worst in 50 years," Ohikhuare said. "This is a very contagious disease, so if you are a parent, family member or caregiver of an infant, you should get a booster shot." Infants are especially vulnerable if they are not immunized or incompletely immunized. Infants under the age of 12 months have more serious illness from pertussis, and they are more likely to have complications and be hospitalized than persons in other age groups.

Pertussis peaks in two to five year cycles. There were 910 cases of pertussis recorded in California as of June 15. San Bernardino County has had 8 confirmed cases and 1 death in 2010. There were 16 pertussis cases in the County in 2009.

The pertussis vaccine is safe for children and adults. Infants can get the first pertussis vaccination at 2 months of age, but they aren't adequately protected until the series of three shots is complete at 6 months of age. Pregnant women can be vaccinated beginning in the second trimester, but not before 12 weeks gestation.

Parents can also help protect very young infants by reducing contact with persons who have cold symptoms or cough illness. Pertussis is a bacterial illness spread through the air from person-to-person, through close contact with droplets released when someone coughs or sneezes. The illness starts with cold-like symptoms that get more severe after one-to-two weeks. Rapid coughing fits follow, that may have a whooping sound, lasting 6 to 10 weeks.

Protection from the childhood vaccine fades over time. Adults are urged to contact their health care provider for information about the booster vaccine that is best for them. The

San Bernardino County Department of Public Health will provide pertussis vaccine in all its clinics. For clinic locations and schedules call 1 (800) 782-4264, or visit the website at [www.sbcounty.gov/dph](http://www.sbcounty.gov/dph).

For more facts about pertussis and vaccine guidance, visit the California Department of Public Health website at <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Pertussis.aspx>, or the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vpd-vac/pertussis/default.htm>.

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